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MILITARY

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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. Gromyko Foreign Policy Speech (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

The main interest in Gromyko's December 23 Supreme Soviet speech was in his treatment of US-Soviet relations. Predictably, he put the onus for the deterioration in relations since last spring on the Eisenhower administration, citing the U-2 flight as evidence of US perfidiousness. He took a cautious, wait-and-see approach to the new administration, making the point that the USSR would respond to any evidence of good will on the US side. Gromyko's moderate discussion of US-Soviet relations (and also of Soviet relations with Yugoslavia) contrasted strikingly with the bitingly critical formulas used in the Declaration issued at the end of the recent Moscow meeting of Communist parties. The contrast illustrated Soviet ability to compartmentalize party and inter-governmental affairs, rather than any change in basic policy.

On the whole, the speech was a restatement of the thesis concerning the change in the correlation of international political forces, with heavy emphasis on the rise to independence of former colonial countries. The West was portrayed as more and more isolated, in particular in the UN discussions of disarmament and the granting of independence to colonial areas. As regards disarmament, Gromyko indicated that Moscow would continue to urge a special UNGA session next spring with the participation of heads of government. He took the occasion to contrast Khrushchev's disarmament proposals with alleged Western inability to present a comprehensive plan. His lengthy discussion of the NATO ministerial meeting suggested Soviet apprehension about the proposal to make NATO a "fourth atomic power" through making available to it US medium-range ballistic missiles.

2. Laos (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

Although Laos has been identified by Gromyko in his Supreme Soviet speech as one of the main trouble spots at the moment and although the USSR has involved itself deeply in Laotian affairs by supplying Kong Le's rebel forces with military equipment and by diplomatic activity to reassert the 1954 Geneva agreements on Indo-China with respect to Laos, the Soviet press has kept coverage on Laos to a minimum. Through the brief TASS despatches, however, a Soviet newspaper reader could discern elements of trouble: the allegation that Kong Le's forces had withdrawn from Ventiane to spare the population and historic monuments; the Chicom threat to "reexamine measures for guaranteeing its own security" in connection with Laos; and the clear impression that US and Soviet interests are ranged against each other in a military situation.

3. Congo (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

Khrushchev's reply to a telegram from Lumumba's deputy in Stanleyville, Gizenga, seemed a further illustration of Soviet caution as regards Congo. Khrushchev stated that the USSR, together with other states friendly to Congo, would continue to extend every possible assistance to the Congolese people and its legal government. The formula "together with other states" conveyed the impression that unilateral Soviet

intervention was not contemplated.

On the propaganda side, the "free Lumumba" campaign continued within the USSR, as did the effort to portray independent African states as disillusioned with the UN action in Congo. A lengthy Pravda summary of Nasser's Port Said speech commemorating the 1956 Suez events strongly emphasized his criticism of the UN. The Soviet press also continued to project the Lumumba forces in Stanleyville as a national center of resistance to Mobutu and imperialism.

4. Germany (LIMITED OFFICIAL USE)

The Soviet press on December 29, in a brief and factual TASS story, reported the meeting between Soviet Ambassador Smirnov and Chancellor Adenauer and the agreement which was reportedly reached on Soviet-FRG trade. No reference was made to the question of aBerlin clause.

Earlier the German Embassy in Moscow informed the Embassy that Soviet officials had warned them that the rupture of trade talks would have a negative effect on the repatriation question and cultural exchange discussions. However, warning notwithstanding, they had the impression that the Soviets desired a trade agreement and would probably find an acceptable formula to overcome the disagreement on the inclusion of Berlin in the trade agreement.

INTERNAL

5. Leadership (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

For the top party leaders it has been a busy week with much travelling. All Moscow-resident members and candidate members of the CPSU Presidium left Moscow at least once to address one or more political rallies. Candidate members Ya. E. KALNBERZIN and A.P. KIRILENKO were seen only once in public during the week — M.G. PERVUKHIN apparently was at his post as Ambassador to East Germany. N.S. KHRUSHCHEV chaired two publicly-announced meetings of the Council of Ministers; one on December 24 to discuss fulfillment of the agricultural plan, the other on December 28 to discuss irrigation. The significant absence of Agriculture Minister V.V. MATSKEVICH from reports of both of these meetings discussing agricultural subjects foreshadowed announcement of his dismissal from that post December 29. With others in the Presidium, Khrushchev also attended sessions of both the RSFSR and USSR Supreme Soviet Sessions which were convened in Moscow during the week. For the second time (see WEEKA No. 52, Despatch No. 428 of Dec. 23, 1960) former Presidium member A.I. KIRICHENKO was seen in the USSR Supreme Soviet on December 23. This session was attended by 15 of the 21 Presidium members. Subsequently a series of more than 30 mass meetings with activists of provincial cities the length and breadth of the Soviet Union have required most Presidium members to travel a great deal. Even F.R. KOZLOV, who like Khrushchev remained for most of the week in Moscow and was occupied with an All-Union Seminar for Lecturers, departed to attend a December 29 plenum of the Armenian CC in Yerevan where he also spoke at an activist's meeting.

Three Kray Party Committee secretaries also elected at the December 28 plenum are: V.K. SHISHONKOV, V.P. DEMIDENKO and S.N. MASHEV. Shishonkov has been Deputy Chairman of the Bureau for Northern Oblasts under Sokolov. The Embassy has no record of the other two.

Ex-Agriculture Minister of the USSR V.V. MATSKEVICH will serve the Kray as Chairman of the Executive Committee. (Pravda, Dec. 30.) In view of the difficulties his new position entails and recent criticism levied against him, even if the transfer is dressed up like a "trouble-shooting" assignment, it has all of the appearances of a severe demotion.

8. Stalin's 81st Birthday Anniversary (UNCLASSIFIED)

The 81st anniversary of Stalin's birth passed unnoticed in the central press, but in the Georgian press was commemorated by a half-page article and a flattering picture. (Zarya Vostoka, Dec. 21) The paper also gave an account of a December 20 celebration at Stalin's birthplace, Gori. Offering a favorable version of Stalin's biography, brief mention is also made of "serious mistakes connected with the personality cult" committed by Stalin "in the last period of his life". The unsigned article asserts that the party has taken all necessary measures for rectifying this matter.

MILITARY

(Negative)

For the Ambassador:

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